

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

MINUTES OF MEETING 11 MARCH 2004

CULLODEN HOUSE HOTEL, INVERNESS

Present: Liz Burns (Chair)
Peter Burman
Neil Galbraith
Mark Hopton
Ian Johnson
Finlay Lockie
Eleanor McAllister
Charles McKean
Clare Meredith
Ross Noble
Andrew Wright
Malcolm Bangor-Jones (Secretary)

In attendance: Sheenagh Adams, Director of Heritage Policy, Historic Scotland
Susan Williamson, Head of Heritage Policy, Historic Scotland

Welcome and apologies

1. Welcome to Sheenagh Adams, Historic Scotland. Apologies were noted from Martin Hulse.

Minutes of the meeting of 19 December 2003

2. The minutes of the meeting were approved.

Matters arising

RCAHMS

HEACS(04)1

3. Council noted the paper concerning the RCAHMS. It was noted that the proposed changes to the Royal Commission which were to be introduced by the Public Appointments & Public Bodies etc (Scotland) Act had been dropped because of the financial impact caused by the loss of charitable status. It was also noted that the Commission would be reviewed in the next year or so. Members of HEACS were meeting with the Commissioners on 26 March.

Standing Orders

HEACS(04)2

4. Council considered the Standing Orders and agreed that:

- paragraph 5.3 should be amended to read 'no later than three weeks'. It was understood that this referred to the Council minutes being made available to the Chair's Group.

Notes of Working Group meetings would be made available to Group Chairs as soon as possible;

- paragraph 8.2 should be reworded to reflect that fact that Council minutes would only be published on the HEACS website after they had been confirmed;
- a section should be drafted to cover the purpose and conduct of the Council's Public Meeting;
- paragraph 12.3 should be amended to read 'every three years or when circumstances suggest or require an earlier review'; and
- the Standing Orders would be brought back to Council for approval but could be used in the meantime.

ACTION: Chair, Secretary

Budget

HEACS(04)3

5. Council noted the budget paper. It was agreed that the additional allocation of £20,000 to consultancy for 2004-05 suggested at the last Council meeting need not be made until more detailed proposals were available.

Industrial Museums

HEACS(04)4

6. Council discussed the correspondence with the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, Mr McAveety, about the financial situation of Scotland's industrial museums. While the Minister's response was thought to be positive, concerns were expressed about the nature of the conditions attached to the Scottish Executive's offer of support to the Scottish Maritime Museum, and the long term future of the industrial museums sector as a whole. It was agreed that Council would give further consideration to the issue at its next meeting.

CoSLA

HEACS(04)5

7. Council discussed the forthcoming meeting with CoSLA. It was reported that the subject of a meeting had been raised at HEACS' recent meeting with the Minister. It was felt that HEACS needed to understand the changed structures within CoSLA and how CoSLA viewed its links with the historic environment. The question of the capacity within local authorities to carry out their responsibilities with regards to the historic environment should be raised. It was felt that the Local Authorities Working Group needed to be able to interact with CoSLA in a meaningful manner. The question of how CoSLA could speak on behalf of local authorities was raised. Historic Scotland reported that, at a recent meeting with Mr McAveety, concern had been expressed by CoSLA that the Scottish Executive was engaging with officer bodies such as the Society of Scottish Directors of Planning, rather than with CoSLA.

Six-monthly report to the Minister

8. It was noted that representatives of Council had met with the Minister. Mr McAveety had undertaken to attend and speak at the conference on 22 September.

HEACS's response to consultation on modernising PLIs

9. It was agreed that the issue of how the Minister might encourage greater public participation should be referred to the Council's Legislation Working Group.

T & S for co-opted members of Working Groups

10. It was noted that Members had been informed that co-opted members of Working Groups might be reimbursed for travel and subsistence costs. It was for Working Group Chairs to decide how to thank those attending meetings.

VAT

11. Council considered that VAT was a very significant issue for the historic environment and it was agreed that the Chair should write to the Minister.

ACTION: Chair

Working Group reports

Historic Scotland Review Group

HEACS(04)6 and 7

12. Council noted the Report of the Review, the Audit Scotland Report and the Historic Scotland Stakeholder Research. Council also noted as background the emphasis on delivery as an additional capability in the Prime Minister's speech at the Civil Service Reform, Delivery and Values event, and in the accompanying Cabinet Office publication.

13. In meeting with the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport prior to the release of the Report of the Review, Council's Historic Scotland Review Group had stressed that the need for substantial cultural change should be highlighted and not underestimated. There were important changes to be made, especially in the way Historic Scotland worked. The Group had supported the recommendation for external non-executives on the Historic Scotland Management Board and the recommendation covering working with stakeholders had been welcomed. The need for capacity building and the role of key players, especially in voluntary sector and local government, had also been emphasised to the Minister. Particular stress had been placed on the need for a champion for the historic environment and for a statement of government policy. It had been suggested that local authorities should have been included in the recommendation concerning the championing of the historic environment. It had also been pointed out that the Report had not mentioned IT, in particular the need for an IT strategy, and the perceived weaknesses of the agency's educational role. It had been suggested that the criticisms of Historic Scotland needed to be acknowledged. The First National Conference might provide a platform for the Minister to make a policy statement.

14. Council noted that a Change Management Group had been established within Historic Scotland to take forward all the issues raised by the three reviews. The main focus would be on bringing about cultural change. Historic Scotland would be paying attention to the views of stakeholders. The agency recognised that there was a need to make contact with local authorities at a strategic level. Historic Scotland would be reporting on progress to the Minister and to HEACS. Council also noted that Historic Scotland would be consulting on its Corporate Plan with key stakeholders, HEACS and BEFS this year, given timescales, and more widely in the future.

15. It was reported that the Review Steering Group had emphasised the importance of a better appreciation of the historic environment within all parts of the Scottish Executive: Scottish Ministers as a whole did not understand what the historic environment was about.

Council's attention was drawn to the recommendation that the Scottish Executive Planning Divisions should advise Ministers on the outcome of Public Local Inquiries in relation to listed building and scheduled ancient monument consent applications. Concern was expressed that the Planning Divisions might not have the necessary expertise. It was noted that this recommendation was under consideration by Historic Scotland and Planning Divisions: there were wider ramifications for other parts of Government.

16. In discussion, the importance of encouraging scholarship and information exchange was emphasised. It was also felt that there was a need for a statement which made the wide-ranging nature of the historic environment better understood.

17. It was agreed that HEACS would maintain an interest in the implementation of the Review's recommendations at a strategic level. In the meantime, the Chair would write to the Minister with a summary of Council's deliberations.

Action: Chair

Audit Scotland Report

18. Council considered the Audit Scotland report on Historic Scotland. It was noted that Audit Scotland had suggested that HEACS could act as a conduit for the views of stakeholders. It was felt that Audit Scotland had misunderstood the role of HEACS and it was agreed that a meeting should be sought with Audit Scotland with the aim of ensuring a better understanding. It was noted that the report had been considered by the Audit Committee of the Scottish Parliament which had decided to take no further action. Monitoring of the report would be a matter for Audit Scotland. Council discussed the question of performance targets for Historic Scotland. It was agreed that Council would consider the issue further when it came to consider Historic Scotland's draft Corporate Plan.

Action: Chair

Historic Scotland Stakeholder Research

19. Council noted that, while the stakeholder research undertaken for Historic Scotland had been based on a relatively small consultation exercise, it had produced the same views of Historic Scotland as the wider consultation associated with the review.

Legislation Working Group

HEACS(04)8

20. Council noted the report of the Legislation Working Group. The Group had been considering all legislation bearing on the historic environment, was moving towards focusing on its remit and was about to set down some emerging issues. It was noted that Historic Scotland was looking at list descriptions and that the agency followed Treasury guidance on allowing developers a 3.5% profit on grant-aided projects.

Audit Working Group

HEACS(04)9

21. Council noted the report of the Audit Working Group. Council was grateful for the significant assistance which had been provided by BEFS. The Working Group hoped to have drafted a report in advance of the next Council meeting. It was noted that Ministers would not take a view on the issue until HEACS had reported.

Local Authorities Working Group

HEACS(04)10

22. Council noted the report of the Local Authorities Working Group. It was noted that the Group was considering its remit. The Group felt that a meeting with CoSLA was essential. Council noted the Heritage Futures paper on Community Planning.

Skills and Materials Working Group

HEACS(04)11

23. Council noted the report of the Skills and Materials Working Group. Council considered the relationship of the craftspeople to the construction industry. The possibility of a seminar involving craftspeople as a form of consultation was discussed. The uneven geographical distribution of skilled craftspeople was raised.

Properties in Care

HEACS(04)12

24. Council noted the report of the Properties in Care Working Group. It was reported that the Group had considered issues around Properties in Care as a cultural portfolio and the use of mothballing. However, the Group felt that the real issue was the plight of buildings which would not be taken into state care.

Consultation and research

HEACS(04)13 and 14

25. Council noted the importance of working in a consultative way, although Council was not a conduit for bringing stakeholder views to the attention of Ministers. The Scottish Executive guidance on undertaking consultations was noted. It was open to Working Groups to consult in the way they felt most appropriate. It was agreed that Council might undertake limited consultations on issues before finalising its views. The appropriateness or value of such consultation would be decided on a case-by-case basis.

26. Council noted the paper setting out the proposed arrangements for commissioning research.

Committee Reports

Chair's Group

HEACS(04)15

27. Council noted the minutes of the Chair's Group meeting.

28. Council discussed arrangements for its tour of the Borders. It was felt that the tour should, as far as possible, cover all aspects of the historic environment, and encompass a range of interests or bodies involved in caring for the historic environment. It was agreed that Historic Scotland should be involved in the tour. Sufficient time should be set aside for Council to reflect on what had been seen. A meeting with English Heritage should be deferred for the time being. Members were invited to pass suggestions for places to visit to the Secretary.

Action: Members

Work Plan for 2004 and Annual Report

HEACS(04)16

29. Council discussed the draft forward plan. It was agreed that the strategic issues for further consideration would be: economic importance of the historic environment; support for the infrastructure; and the availability of funding. It was agreed that the following members would form working groups to take Council's consideration of these issues forward:

- economic importance: Neil Galbraith (chair), Ian Johnston and Eleanor McAlister;
- infrastructure: Liz Burns (chair), Ross Noble and Clare Meredith; and
- funding : Andrew Wright (chair), Finlay Lockie and Charles McKean.

The Chairs of working groups were invited to consider the timetable.

Action: Chair, Neil Galbraith, Andrew Wright

30. Council considered the timetable for the production of its Annual Report. It was agreed that a draft should be presented to the next Council meeting in June with the aim of the report being produced in September and ready for the Conference and Public Meeting.

Action: Chair

Conference Planning Group

HEACS(04)17

31. Council noted the report of the Conference Planning Group. Members were invited to suggest projects which might form the basis of presentations for the break-out groups.

Action: Members

Website

32. Council discussed the HEACS website. It was suggested that, while the existing website was informative, it might be made more interesting from a design point of view. It was agreed that Mark Hopton and Eleanor McAlister prepare a brief for consideration either by the Chair's Group or by Council.

Action: Mark Hopton, Eleanor McAlister

Register of Interests

33. It was agreed that the Register of Interests might be put onto the website in due course.

Freedom of Information

HEACS(04)18

34. Council noted the paper on the Freedom of Information regime and agreed that the draft Publication Scheme might be further considered by the Chair's Group.

Consultation Papers

Scottish Executive: Review of Treasure Trove Arrangements

HEACS(04)19

35. Council noted its response to the consultation.

Scottish Natural Heritage: Scotland's Future Landscapes

HEACS(04)20

36. Council noted its response to the consultation.

Forestry Commission: review of land managed by FC Scotland

HEACS(04)21

37. Council noted its response to the consultation.

38. Council thanked Neil Galbraith, Ian Johnson and Peter Burman for their work on these papers.

Historic Scotland: Carved Stones

HEACS(04)22

39. Council noted the Historic Scotland consultation paper on Carved Stones. Peter Burman and Charles McKean agreed to consider the paper.

Action: Peter Burman, Charles McKean

Scottish Executive: CAP Reform

HEACS(04)23

40. Council noted the Scottish Executive consultation paper on CAP Reform. Ian Johnson agreed to consider the paper.

Action: Ian Johnson

Meetings with other agencies

Historic Houses Association

HEACS(04)24

41. The note of the meeting with the Historic Houses Association was noted.

Angus Council

42. Council considered an invitation from the Conservation Officer at Angus Council. It was agreed that Council might visit Angus in December and that a visit to the Planning Department might form part of the itinerary. Charles McKean would convey this to the Conservation Officer.

Action: Charles McKean

Information Exchange with Historic Scotland

43. Council was informed about several forthcoming publications: Historic Scotland consultation on defining National Importance for scheduled monuments; a UK consultation on the Maritime Heritage; and a forthcoming Historic Scotland consultation on historic building repair grants. The debate on the historic environment in the Scottish Parliament was mentioned. It was noted that the applicant for Scheduled Monument Consent for Castle Tioram had decided not to pursue an appeal but that a petition had been presented to the Scottish Parliament. Mention was made of Council's potential role in relation to the identification of World Heritage Sites. It was noted that the development of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary site was an example of a major planning application in a World Heritage Site which UNESCO required to be informed of.

AOB

Access arrangements

44. Council noted that concern had been expressed that the development of the guidance on Access appeared to be weighted towards the natural heritage. There was a risk that opportunities might be missed. It was agreed to keep the matter under review.

Name badges and Council gift

45. It was agreed that Council members should be provided with name badges and that the Chair's Group would consider a suitable Council gift.

Meeting dates

46. The next meeting would take place at Dryburgh on 19 June during the Council Tour. The December Council meeting would take place on 17 December in Angus. Dates for Council meetings in 2005 would be considered in due course.

HEACS

April 2004